

ART
OF
PUFFING

AN

INAUGURAL ORATION,

Nil desperandum Teucro duce, et auspice Teucro.

EDINBURGH:

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T - R - A

P U B L I S H I N G

NOTATION



My copy contains a number of notes & references.

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THE
ART OF PUFFING,
AN
INAUGURAL ORATION.

CALLED, by the unanimous voice of the Public, to fill this Chair, I accept of it, conscious of my own merit, and great abilities, so well fitted to shine in this sphere. To other Chairs my title may be questioned and disputed, and my Rivals find favour in the eyes of some. With regard to this, my right has been universally acknowledged, and every Candidate has
* *hid his diminished head.*

According, therefore, to ancient and laudable custom, by which each new Professor

* MILTON.

fessor is obliged to exhibit an essay-piece, or a proof of the deep skill and knowledge he has in his own branch of literature, I mount the Chair to pronounce an Inaugural Oration in praise of Puffing. I do it with the more boldness, as the world is well convinced, what practice and experience I have had in the art; and, therefore, must think me best fitted to teach the theory, and reduce it to as regular a system, and as fix'd rules, as any other branch of science.

Bred to the pursuit of one of the *mute arts*, was not nature all-prevailing, I would perhaps, fall short of that eloquence, which the weight and dignity of the subject requires. But a consciousness of the benefit it is to its votaries, and the great assistance I can give them, enables me, with chearfulness, to undertake the task.

This art is of the utmost extent in the conduct of human affairs. It is useful to the lowest mechanic, as well as to the most sublime genius. It gives their productions that engaging finishing, that noble *contour*, so much admired by the gazing world, in the
works

works of the great artists. Let but this art add its divine influence, immediately all opposition is silenced, and the work is applauded and revered as a master-piece of its kind. It stamps, in a moment, more value on a modern performance, than what the hoary age of two thousand years can bestow. Rejoice ye modern artists! that a system so useful is brought to perfection in your days.

This science not only embellishes and gives value to the whole circle of arts, but even supplies their place when wanting; so that the deficiency cannot be discovered. What need of real knowledge and a laborious pursuit of dull nature, when fancy can dress up ideal systems of its operations, and the noble Art of Puffing give them currency. Ignorance itself may even hope to rise to the height of admiration, by the help of this admirable science.

The ancients, indeed, seem to have been of a different opinion, when they erected a temple to Honour, to which there was no access, but thro' another dedicated to
Virtue;

Virtue ; intimating the necessity of undergoing a laborious life, and of atchieving great and useful deeds, in order to intitle them to a lasting character. But their views of things, were, in many respects, very limited ; and in none more, than the subject I am treating of. The moderns, far more judicious, have removed the temple of Virtue ; and placed, in its stead, the temple of Puffing, as the only passage to fame ; a road far shorter and more agreeable. Happy moderns ! who can so easily arrive at eternal reputation.

Thou noble and divine art ! thou greatest blessing, that heaven ever bestowed on undeserving mortals ! faithful conductor of Ignorance to the temple of eternal fame ! where shall I find language suited to thy dignity, and equal to my own ideas ! Send me, for a moment, thy magic influence, while I sound thy deserved praises to the listening world.

It adds surely a great dignity to arts, as well as nations, to trace their origin from the remotest antiquity. Now, the subject

I am treating is superior, in this respect, to all others ; for none can boast so ancient, and even divine an original, as this. Husbandry, trade, and medicine, were, doubtless, first taught to mortals by the Gods ; tho' that was long after the creation.

But this art arose in heaven itself. *Milton*, who knew, perfectly, all that passed before the creation, and whose credit no body will doubt, informs us, that *Satan*, ere yet he was expelled heaven, invented this great instrument of power ; and by means of it, drew after him the third part of heaven's host.

Boasting he could subdue

Th' Omnipotent,

Milton.

was the great engine of his rebellion. True, it did not meet with that success, which generally attends such attempts, in modern times, as he seduced so few. But that might have arisen from its not being brought to that perfection, which it has attained in our days.

Pray,

Pray, what are all eastern annals, and accompts of the origin of empires, when compared to this? Nothing sure. It's true, the progress of science is not, easily, traced in the dark ages of the world; nor shall we take up much time, in such fruitless speculations. Tho' it may add some lustre, surely, to the subject we are now upon, to mention a few names of the many ancients, who practised this art, and with what success to the practitioners themselves.

The first Puffer upon record, so far as I can recollect, is *THERSITES*, whom *Homer* introduces vaunting of his own courage, and reviling the *Grecian* chiefs. *Ulysses*, indeed, gave him a hearty drubbing; not, as *Homer* tells the story, for his detraction, so necessary a branch of Puffing, as will afterwards appear, but from envy of his new and superior species of oratory. Great inventors and discoverers, who study only the good of mankind, have often met with disappointments from them.

Thessalus Trallianus a Physician, who practised in *Nero's* time, was a man according

ing to my own heart. He wrote against *Hippocrates*, and aspersed the first Physicians of his time, gaining many proselytes, by the boldness of his oratory. Altho' he never invented any thing, yet he boasted, that he alone knew the secrets of medicine. He asserted, that he could teach, in six months, all that ought to be learned in Physic. 'Tis true, *Galen* thought otherwise, and wrote against him.

Paracelsus is another remarkable instance of the great benefit of this art, to those who practise it. For without any regular application to study, and after leading a vagrant life, being called to fill the chair at *Basil*, he taught medicine, in the vulgar *Swiss* language, not having *Latin* sufficient for it, throwing out invectives, incessantly, against all the Physicians of that age. Amongst the first things he did, after getting the chair, was to burn *Galen*, and other authors; saying, The world had no occasion for any other, besides himself. And he, likewise, had many followers.

B

Perhaps

Perhaps it may create prejudice, in the minds of some well-disposed persons, against the subject, I am treating, that we find it marked by one of the sacred Penmen, as a characteristic of a wicked man, That * *as for all his enemies he puffeth at them.* But it is obvious, that the holy Writer must have meant something different from this noble and useful art, which has been practised, since his time, by worthy men of all professions.

Is not *Cicero* who saved his city and citizens from destruction, a strong instance of this, when he told the lawyers of his time, that if he had a mind, he could become master of all the knowledge, requisite for their profession, in three days? *Archimedes* too, is another great example, who used to say, that he could easily move this world, provided he had another to stand upon.

But this branch of knowledge has been, truly, so much alter'd, and improv'd, by the moderns, whose respectable names I
am

am obliged to pass over, for brevity's sake, that no scruple ought to remain, against the goodness of my subject. I shall now proceed to consider the nature of the Art itself.

It has, always, been the custom of authors, to search into the etymology of the name of the science they treated of. Here I shall, shortly, observe, that some curious enquirers derive Puff, from the *German* word *Poff*, signifying a blast, which swells the cheeks with wind: and, as I understand that language, their conjecture seems probable. Others, with less probability, derive it from a term of Cookery, denoting things of a light and superficial nature. But however satisfying such investigations might be to critical enquirers, the bounds I have prescribed to myself, in this oration, does not permit of such digressions; or even of wasting time, in giving definitions, which are said, by a *Roman* lawyer, to be in many cases very dangerous.

I shall, therefore, now proceed, according

according to the practice of the modern scientific writers, who lay more stress upon the regularity of the system, than on its intrinsic contents, to the principal division of my subject, to wit, unto the *Puff oblique*, and the *Puff direct*. This may suffice, at present, without troubling my hearers with subdivisions; tho' these are, often, as warmly inculcated unto students, as the most material facts, or leading principles of the science; and indeed, are to authors, in some sense, what tools are to a mechanic, or tradesman, very necessary in executing the task undertaken.

It is said the *Tartars* believe they inherit the courage of every enemy they kill,
As if just so much he enjoy'd,
As in another is destroy'd.

HUDIBRAS.

Just so, say some grave authors, whatever good qualities we can rob another of, are added directly, to ourselves. Such is the nature and advantage of the *Puff oblique*, which is, unjustly called by the world

world Detraction. This is an excellent foundation to build the Puff direct upon, for we see, in the history of this art; Puffing and detraction have, always been united in the same person,

The *Puff oblique* is conducted in *Europe* by many other ways, that are less bloody, than what are practised in the East. Inuendos, nods, and hints, against an antagonist, when your interest requires it, will be found, often, to answer the purposes, you aim at, as well, as the *Tartar* method; and, most certainly, a much safer one in a Christian country.

However this may, in some cases, tho' very rarely, be thought a perilous branch of science. If, peradventure, the sufferer refuse to * *stand, like Patience on a monument*, and see you endeavour, by a course of unprovok'd injuries, and for the most interested ends, to † *filch from him his good name*.

You will naturally ask, how are you to
behave

* Shakespear.

† Shakespear.

behave in such a situation? I answer nothing more easy. Assume a temporary bravery, however contrary to your nature; give him a defiance; endeavour, by every artifice, to lead him unto the intricate windings of the law; and, then, if you fasten your paw on him, put him to the knowledge of an inquest, a species of knowledge few people are fond of.

But, if this end cannot be attained, take fright; swear, like *M'Beath*, that *he has murder'd Sleep*; and be sure to get him bound down by every legal fetter. In this way you save all acknowledgment of guilt. Then, by your emissaries, tell a story, that will throw the blame upon your antagonist.

Well, but perhaps you may think your honour hurt by these methods. If so, you have a mistaken notion of honour; for, pray, what have peaceable scientific people to do with such refinements? They never are taught it in the course of their studies. How, therefore, should they have any knowledge of it? Besides, the world
does

does not expect, that you should behave like gentlemen ; but rather like the *Dutch*, who chuse, by every means, however dishonourable, to protect themselves from their enemies.

But to return from what may be thought a digression, tho' there are great authors who have wrote digressions in favours of digressions. The great powers of this art depend upon the *Puff direct*. That is, in other words, doing every thing in our power, to set our character in the highest point of view. This was warmly recommended, by one of the most elegant * historians, amongst the ancients ; tho' the picture he draws of his hero, is not such, as a virtuous man would chuse to copy in the pursuit of fame.

But, surely, this goddess Fame ought to be courted by every laudable method in one's power ; and it must be acknowledged, she never had more incense offered up to her, by the learned, than in the age we live in. Certainly, this is, in a
more

* Salust.

more particular manner, necessary for those who follow the mute arts; else it may seldom happen, that they have a chance of rising above the level of the ordinary race of men.

Where no other, or extraordinary circumstances occur, the most direct method for such to follow, in pursuit of glory, is to be a living chronicle of their own praises. We must acknowledge, it is expecting too much from the generality of people, to suppose, that they will put confidence in those, who do not speak highly in their own behalf.

Therefore you should plainly tell the world, " That you are a man of general
 " *worth* and abilities, which is known
 " to all the learned; that your reputation
 " has spread itself, to distant parts; that
 " you are, eminently, qualified, in every
 " branch of your profession; and have
 " a peculiar talent and felicity in communicating your thoughts." This is, undoubtedly, the finest model of the Puff direct, that is to be found, either amongst
 the

the ancients or moderns; and cannot fail of giving the generality of mankind a noble idea of your merit, and of attaining those purposes you have in view. But should any person be so foolishly squeemish, as to startle at this method, there are many others left, which have been known to answer the end proposed, as well; tho' it may be here observed, that in all deviations from the direct road, every man must be left to judge for himself, according as circumstances, at the time, shall prevail.

To explain what I mean, have we not seen many physicians acquire great and lasting reputations, by inventing, or rather patronising something new in the way of their profession? Thus Dr. *A-----n*, by recommending his own pill, which, by the bye, has been working off the peccant humours of this nation, for near a century past, acquired a character, that has survived the works of many a modern author. Did not Dr. *C-----e*, next, by writing a treatise on the benefit of a

C vegetable

vegetable diet, send all the quality and gentry of *England* a grasing like *Nebuchadnezzar*? And have not others, in our time, gain'd much fame, by prescribing large draughts of water to their patients; so that to see them, in certain attitudes, one would take them for exact copies of the celebrated fountain at *Brussels*?

It would be endless to enumerate the names of all the great patrons of medical fashions. But since I am now speaking of such, allow me, here, to mention a few of the many discoveries, I have made, in this branch of science, and which none of the sons of *Esculapius* ever thought of; for * *I'll do nothing that ever was done before.*

“ *First*, Then, I have found out, that
 “ the gout is a disease in the nerves, and
 “ not in the blood! For, if that was the
 “ seat of the disorder, it could not make
 “ such quick transitions from one part to
 “ another.

“ *2dly,*

* Rehearsal.

“ 2dly, I hold, there is no morbid
“ matter in fevers.

“ And, 3dly, I maintain, that all dis-
“ orders, except the scurvy, even fevers,
“ lodge in the solids.” These are great
discoveries indeed ; but want of time
will not permit me to illustrate them, or
mention others, for which the world is
so eminently indebted to me ; and which
are of such real benefit to mankind, that
tho’ all physical books were burnt, as
was the fate of many, formerly, in the
Alexandrian library, that branch of learn-
ing would not suffer.

Hence you gentlemen, who are des-
tin’d for the study of the healing art,
must be highly sensible, how necessary it
is, to find out, in the way of your pro-
fession, something new, by which you
may recommend yourselves to the fash-
ionable world, and build a name more
lasting than walls of brass.

Another advice I cannot help giving
you, and that is, Always ascribe your suc-
cesses to your own skill, giving dame Na-
ture

ture no share of the praise. In this you have the example of many brave generals and statesmen, who, usually, take the honour of a victory to themselves, which either they did not see, or if they did, saw it at a prudent distance, thro' a magnifying glass. But if any unexpected event happen, as it must to the greatest men that ever lived, throw the blame on Nature. Her shoulders are broad enough. Here you have a remarkable advantage over all other professions; for, as an ancient Philosopher said, The sun shineth upon your success, but the earth covereth your failures.

You will learn, by attending my class, many other useful rules, which are in a particular manner, beneficial to Physic; though I shall not at present insist upon them; but turn my views to such of my hearers whom fate may have destined for being Professors or Teachers, in any branch of literature. These, if there are any such here, I would advise, by all means, to procure as great a list of students

dents as possible. But, perhaps, I may be asked, how is this to be obtained? Nothing easier. Give lectures upon P — y, or any other subject foreign to your own, once a week, *gratis*, to those, who shall attend your lectures a second year. This will draw in many to take another course, who, perhaps, might have rested satisfied with the first. Allow likewise those who have attended you two years, to come a third for nothing. By this means you will not only be a real gainer in the main; but it must greatly help to spread your fame, when it is said, that you have as many students, or more than any Professor in the college, you belong to; and, even, give you a solid foundation, on which to build your own praises, and to show of what advantage you are to the Public.

Further, allow me to observe, that as *Latin* is understood but by few, you ought not to prelect in that language, whatever some professors, particularly foreign ones, may say to the contrary: and this circumstance,

stance, too, will add, greatly, to the number of your hearers, which ought, always, to be the chief object in view. And when any occurrence happens, that requires the mentioning your lectures, appeal, for their excellence, on all occasions, to your disciples, as to the best judges. These, generally speaking, from the love they bear to their teachers, will rehearse whatever he prompts; and as it is opinion, that stamps a value upon every thing, so the world will, without further trouble, declare you a great Professor.

The votaries of this art ought also to talk big, and with great firmness upon every subject. Diffidence or doubtfulness, either in matter or stile, generally speaking, argues an imbecility, altogether improper for such, as would profit by this science.

The grand or sublime is likewise best suited to our profession. This is emphatically called by *Horace*, the *os magna sonaturum*. Tho' I would caution my hearers not

to blend, or confound this branch of literature, with the marvelous; for Puffing does not require, that we should exceed the bounds of probability, in our narrations. Hence I do not reckon the good Bishop of *Bergen* a proficient, in this subject, when he informs us, that there is a fish, called the *Kraken*, sometimes seen on the coast of *Norway*, about an *English* mile and a half in circumference.

Again, much use ought to be made of the vowel I, as that magnifies the speaker, considerably, in the opinion of others. Cardinal *Wolsey*, and many great men, are well known examples, and patterns of what I am now urging.

The choice of such acquaintance, who will sound your praises, is an object, also, not unworthy attention. Attach yourselves, particularly, to such, as are lovers of the art; for they will be most liberal to those, from whom they expect the most grateful returns.

I have, hitherto, directed my views, chiefly, for the advantage of men of letters;

ters; but it must be obvious, of what benefit I can be, to several other professions. May I not hope to be useful, even to a general, in sending home an ostensible account of a battle? To a subaltern, in penning a memorial of his services? Or to a commander at sea, in relating the manner of fighting his ship, yard-arm to yard-arm, though he was not within cannon shot?

May I not propose to be of the utmost service to those, who are usually called Improvers, and who often practise this method of establishing their reputation, without any regular application to the science, trusting in the expectation of what is to come, for the completion of all their schemes? It is needless to dwell on the benefit I may be of to merchants, shop-keepers and mechanics of all kinds, since their gains depend entirely on fame, and the reputation they have in the world.

May I not even be of singular use to the *Minority*, who seem, like *Noah's* dove,
at

at a loss to find ground on which to rest; and where they can gather those olive branches, that are to distinguish them, amongst the free-born sons of *Britain*, as the great bulwarks of liberty, against wicked and tyrannical ministers? With my assistance their olive branches, instead of leaves, will be loaded with fruit, which none of our modern patriots were ever known to disrelish.

Having thus considered what is the duty of the practitioners to do, I must next offer them a few advices, with regard to what they ought to avoid. Here, the first and great rule is, Never to commence an author, particularly of systems; seeing such an author is like him, who builds a house, which every man, who sees, thinks he is entitled to find fault with, whether he has taste or not. By this means he is again reduced to the common level of mankind, than which nothing is more inconsistent with the genius of our art.

But if the passion of authorship is so
D strong,

strong, that it cannot be quite stifled, exhaust it in observations or criticisms, on other peoples works. This species of writing has a peculiar advantage over most others, that a less degree of genius is sufficient for that purpose, as it is much easier to pull down, than erect a building. It has likewise this other, that the good effects of the *Puff oblique* are united to those of the *Puff direct*. But, above all, never write an invective against any person, least he make reprisals; and, if you have no talent for defence, what can you expect, but to be hung up, like *Mahomet's* body, a spectacle to the public.

I shall conclude with observing, That one of the great advantages of this science is, that it raises our spirits above their ordinary pitch; and, thereby, in our own conception, at least, exalts the the dignity of our nature, which is apt to be, too often, depress'd with the humbling prospect of human infirmities. Now, to see things as they really

ly are, we must acknowledge, would not always be of advantage to us, in the intellectual, any more than in the natural world.

Had I time, I could point out many other advantages, that arise from this branch of science; but I am afraid, that I have already been too tedious.

For brevity is very good
When w're, or are not understood.

HUD,

F I N I S.

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Long view of the world
beginning to see the world as it is

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